



ANNUAL REPORT

UPON THE

Health and Sanitary Condition of the
Norham and Islandshires Rural District,

For the Year ending 31st December, 1923,

*To the Chairman and Members of the
Norham & Islandshires Rural District Council.*

MISS GREET AND GENTLEMEN,

I beg to present my Fifth Annual Report, being for the
year ended 31st December, 1923.

GENERAL STATISTICS.

AREA.—The area of the District is 47,072 acres.

POPULATION (1923).—5396

NUMBER OF INHABITED HOUSES (1923).—1309.

NUMBER OF FAMILIES OR SEPARATE OCCUPIERS (1923).—1311

RATEABLE VALUE.—£71,418.

SUM REPRESENTED BY A PENNY RATE.—£166.

BIRTHS.—The births registered during the year numbered 81—47 males and 34 females. 2 of these were illegitimate. This is a decrease of 19 as compared with last year. and represents a birth-rate of 15.01 per 1000 of the population.

DEATHS.—The number of deaths registered in the district numbered 53. After correction through information supplied by the Registrar General, relating to transferable deaths, the number is 56. The death-rate, calculated on the latter number for the whole District, is 10.37 per 1000 of the population. This is a decrease of 17 as compared with the previous year. 33 were persons of 65 years and upwards, 13 between 45 and 65, 4 were children under 1 year.

NOTIFIABLE DISEASES DURING THE YEAR.

			Total Cases Notified.	Cases admitted to Hospital.	TOTAL DEATHS
Diphtheria	...	...	3	1	—
Scarlet Fever	...	...	16	1	—
Pneumonia	...	...	2	—	1
Chicken Pox	...	...	9	—	—
Tuberculosis—					
(a) Pulmonary	...	M. -	1		—
		F. -	4		2
		Total	5	5	—
(b) Non-Pulmonary		M. -	3		1
		F. -	1		—
			4	4	—
Erysipelas	...	...	—	—	—

All the cases of tuberculosis which proved fatal had been previously notified.

SUMMARY OF NURSING ARRANGEMENTS.—The nursing requirements of the District are met by Nurses stationed at Holy Island, Scremerston, Norham-on-Tweed, Twizel, and Cornhill-on-Tweed. Their services continued to give satisfaction to all concerned.

MIDWIVES.—There are no midwives practising in the District.

HOSPITALS.—The Smallpox Hospital at Oxford, Scremerston, has been closed during the year. In view of the prevalence of smallpox in other parts of the County, necessary repairs and painting have been carried out on the building. Patients suffering from other infectious diseases can be admitted to the Fever Hospital at Berwick-on-Tweed, when home treatment is impossible.

HOUSING.—Four new houses were built in the district in the course of the year. Many families continue to live in shelters that furnish more or less protection from wind and weather, but that are in no sense of the term homes. To protest against this state of affairs is futile. Dwellings may be insanitary and overcrowded, but when no other accommodation can be secured for their inmates, closing orders offer no solution of the problem.

On 21st May my attention was called to a hovel at Shoreswood Colliery, which sheltered a family seven in number. Prior to the previous term day it had not been occupied by human inmates for

upwards of twenty years, and immediately before the new use made of it, it had served as a hen house. In my monthly report for May the following allusion was made to the matter—"It would appear that Richard Dixon, a workman previously housed at Shoreswood Hall, had been unable to secure a dwelling before the term day, and that when confronted with the alternative of taking to the roads with his family, he had decided to occupy the ruinous cottage. The walls drip with dampness. There is no chimney, and nothing of the window remains save the frame. Across this has been drawn a sheet, which gives an imperfect protection from the weather, but effectually excludes all sunlight. Anything more squalid it would be impossible to imagine." It is satisfactory to be able to add that during the month of August, Dixon and his family left the District.

Towards the close of the year the Sanitary Inspector and I received instructions to draw up a report on housing conditions in the Scremerston area. These were dealt with in a series of reports submitted to the District Council during the winter of 1919-20. "Since that time," runs my last report, "the cottages at Saltpan How have been roughcast, and three of the one-apartment dwellings have been converted into two. There are still three one-roomed houses. The first of these is occupied by a married couple and two young children, the second by a childless couple, and the third by a married couple and an infant. The capacity of the individual rooms is 1890 cubic feet, and two windows are fixtures. At Sandbanks, what were originally twelve one-apartment houses have been converted into houses of two rooms by means of wooden partitions. There has been no structural alteration at this row since the issue of the series of reports already alluded to. Two dwelling houses allotted to one family accommodate 8 occupants in all. Of the others, No. 1 shelters a married couple and four children whose ages range from 2 to 11; No. 2 is occupied by a married couple, a male relative aged 34, and three children whose ages range from 4 to 13; No. 3 has as its inmates a married couple and six children whose ages range from 4 to 14—it will be noted that this is a bad case of overcrowding; No. 4 has three adult inmates; No. 5 boasts a married couple, an aged female relative, and five children from 5 to 15; No. 6 supplies an instance of gross overcrowding, as it shelters a married couple and seven children whose ages range from 2 to 18—in the kitchen window of this house a layer of brown paper supplies the place of a broken pane; No. 7 is occupied by a married couple and three children who are all under school age; No. 8 repeats the story of No. 6, as it is also tenanted by a married couple and seven children—to complete the resemblance, the free current of air established by a broken window pane has been effectually barred in the same primitive fashion—fortunately, in this household the children, whose ages range from 3 to 13, are all females; No. 9 furnishes a home for a married couple, an elderly female relative, and five children whose ages range from 1 to 18; No. 10 is occupied by three adults and a child of 5. The kitchens of these dwellings have a capacity of

1973 cubic feet, while that of the bedrooms is 1157 cubic feet. At Old Hill there are two one-apartment houses, each occupied by a married couple and two young children. At Old Colliery there are five three-apartment dwellings, but in every instance one of these apartments is unprovided with a window. This is a state of matters which no Public Health Authority would be warranted in ignoring. At this row a one-apartment dwelling, occupied by a married couple and two young children, suggests possibilities of disaster, as, owing to the state of the roof, rain has been coming in, and a considerable portion of the ceiling may fall at any time. . . . To sum up, the one-apartment dwelling ought to be banned in a mining village. At Scremerston, several occupants of cottages of this type entered on their tenancy at the beginning of their married life; such is the house-hunger in the district that, with the passing of the years, they have been unable to obtain other quarters. Under such circumstances, the advent of every child brings additional confusion and squalor, and discontent with home surroundings engenders disaffection towards the body politic. In the course of our visit to Scremerston, the Surveyor and I chanced to call at one single-apartment house in which a pit-man was tubbing himself in the presence of his young children. At any period since the dawn of Christianity such a state of matters would have been unjustifiable, to tolerate the anomaly at the present stage of our political development argues utter folly on the part of our governing classes."

Nothing short of an awakened public conscience can end such conditions. As it is owned and managed by the Lords of the Admiralty, the nation may claim a special interest in the administration of the Scremerston estate, and as there appears to be every likelihood that, in the near future, its coalfield will be worked on a more extensive scale than at present, development on lines approaching to the ideal should be aimed at. In the Scremerston of to-day the most enthusiastic advocate of land nationalisation will assuredly find little to stimulate his ardour.

I am, Miss Greet and Gentlemen,

Your obedient servant,

JAMES McWHIR,

Medical Officer.

NORHAM, June 21, 1924.

HOUSING CONDITIONS.

Year ended 31st December, 1923.

Number of new houses erected during the year:—

(a) Total	...	...	...	...	...	...	4
(b) As part of a Municipal Housing Scheme...	...	...	...	...	...	...	Nil

1. Unfit Dwelling Houses—

Inspection. (1) Total number of dwellinghouses inspected for housing defects (under Public Health or Housing Acts)	208
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(2) Number of dwelling houses which were inspected and recorded under the Housing (Inspection of Dist.) Regulations, 1910	194
(3) Number of dwelling houses found to be in a state so dangerous or injurious to health as to be unfit for human habitation	...	...	...	...	...	Nil
(4) No. of dwelling houses (exclusive of those referred to under the preceding sub-heading) found not to be in all respects reasonably fit for human habitation	...					118
2. Remedy of defects without service of formal notices— No. of defective dwelling houses rendered fit in consequence of informal action by the Local Authority or their officers	...	...	...	...	...	6
3. Action under Statutory powers— (a) Proceedings under sec. 28 of the Housing, Town Planning, &c., Act, 1919.						
(1) No. of dwelling houses in respect of which notices were served requiring repairs	...	...	...	...		Nil
(2) No. of dwelling houses which were rendered fit— (a) By Owners	...	...	...	...	...	Nil
(b) By Local Authority in default of Owners	...	...				Nil
(3) No. of dwelling houses in respect of which Closing Orders became operative in pursuance of declarations by Owners of intention to close	...	...	...	...		Nil
B. Proceedings under Public Health Acts—						
1. No. of dwelling houses in respect of which notices were served requiring defects to be remedied	...	...				12
2. No. of dwelling houses in which defects were remedied— (a) By Owners	...	...	...	...	...	12
(b) By Local Authority in default of Owner	...					Nil
C. Proceedings under sec. 17 and 18 of the Housing, Town Planning, &c., Act, 1909—						
1. No. of representations made with a view to making of Closing Orders	...	...	...	...	...	Nil
2. No. of dwelling houses in respect of which Closing Orders were made	...	...	...	...	...	Nil
3. No. of dwelling houses in respect of which Closing Orders were determined, the dwelling houses having been rendered fit	...	...	...	...	...	Nil
4. No. of dwelling houses in respect of which Demolition Orders were made	...	...	...	...	...	Nil
5. No. of dwelling houses demolished in pursuance of Demolition Orders	...	...	...	...	...	Nil
General character of defects found— Dampness, Defective Light and Ventilation.						

ANNUAL REPORT OF SANITARY INSPECTOR for the Year 1923.

MISS GREET AND GENTLEMEN,

I beg to report that during the year ended 31st December, 1923, periodical visits of inspection have been made to various parts of the District.

During this period no statutory notices have been issued. Informal notices have been issued, drawing attention to various insanitary matters. I have also given verbal intimations to those responsible for choked drains, ashpits cleaning, etc., such instructions were well attended to.

CONDITIONS OF DWELLING HOUSES.—Along with the Medical Officer of Health, I have made inspections of dwelling-houses throughout the District, and reports have, from time to time, been submitted. The Medical Officer is dealing with this matter in his Report.

The principal defects found were dampness, want of light, and ventilation. In many of the older houses these defects are worse, and, in most cases, considerable alterations and expenditure would be necessary to make them healthy and comfortable for the occupiers. It is to be hoped that as matters become more stabilised, extensive repairs and reconstruction will be carried out.

PLANS.—Plans for the erection, alteration, and improvements of buildings have been submitted to, and passed by the Council:—Alterations, 2 cottages, Holy Island; bungalow at Holy Island; alterations at Norham Boathouse; 2 bungalows at Donaldson's Lodge; 1 bungalow at Cornhill; additions to Ancroft North Moor Farm House; Manager's house, Middle Scremerston; bungalow at Greenlawalls; plan of lay-out of building site at Grove Park, Tweedmouth; plan of piggeries, Horncliffe; and Washhouse at Norham.

During the year building activity has been greater than at any time during the last few years.

WATER SUPPLIES.—During the year the water supplies from springs, wells, and other sources have remained good.

At Norham Water Works, it is proposed to increase the size of the collecting tank, and instal a new pump and engine.

At Horncliffe and Ord villages, Committees have under consideration the installation of gravitation water supplies.

SANITATION.—The Ashpit and Privy system is prevalent in the District. In the larger houses there are baths and water-closets where private gravitation or public gravitation water supplies make it possible. Septic Tank systems are being installed at nearly all the new houses erected.

DISINFECTION.—Premises have been disinfected at Grindon, Norham, Shoreswood, East Ord, and Scremerston.

DAIRIES AND COWSHEDS.—Inspections of dairies and cowsheds have been made. Orders for limewashing have been attended to. The number of milk cows kept is about the same as in the year previous.

FACTORIES AND WORKSHOPS.—These number 34. Upon inspection, no contraventions of the regulations were found.

I am,

Your obedient servant,

J. ROMANS LAKE,
Sanitary Inspector.

East Ord, Berwick-on-Tweed,

21st June, 1924.

Sanitary Inspector's Annual Report—Year 1923

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